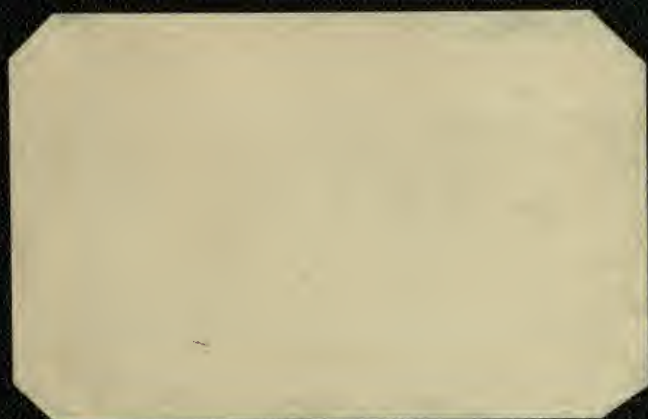


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*Presented with the Compliments of the Saint Nicholas
Society of the City of New York.*

George G. De Witt,
Secretary,

88 Nassau Street.





E. BIERSTADT, N. Y.

THE CITY HALL, NEW YORK, IN 1893

Taken for The Saint Nicholas Society of the City of New York.

ARTOTYPE.

HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION
OF THE
CERTIFICATE OF MEMBERSHIP
OF THE
ST. NICHOLAS SOCIETY
OF NEW-YORK



Adopted December 1, 1892



NEW-YORK
PRINTED BY ORDER OF THE SOCIETY
1893

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Gift

Mrs. Julian James

1912

PREFATORY NOTE.

This report, printed by order of the St. Nicholas Society, is intended simply to show the appropriateness of the historic edifices, views, and coats of arms of the city of New-York, as illustrations of the Certificate of Membership, or Diploma, of the Society. It is not to be taken as a history of the subjects of these illustrations, but merely as a brief outline of their origin and objects. For the facts, dates, and statements quoted, the official records of the city itself, which were personally examined, are the authority. The photographic view of the City Hall, as it exists at present, in 1893, appended to this report, was taken for the Society, by direction of the Board of Officers, to preserve for the future the exact appearance of that edifice before it shall be removed, pursuant to the decision of the Corporation of New-York, to erect a larger City Hall upon its site, arrived at since this report was made and adopted.

EDWARD FLOYD DE LANCEY.



EXTRACT FROM THE MINUTES OF
DECEMBER 1, 1892.

The Special Committee on Certificate of Membership, through their Chairman, Mr. Edward F. de Lancey, presented their report, and also the design of the certificate, handsomely framed.

On motion of Mr. Smith E. Lane, duly seconded, it was

Resolved: 1. That the report of the Committee on Certificate be received and placed on file.

2. That the design for the new Certificate of Membership, as reported by the Committee on Certificate, be accepted and adopted.

3. That the Committee on Certificate be continued, and they are hereby authorized and empowered to have executed one thousand copies of the certificate for the use of the Society upon the terms reported by them.

4. That when the printing shall be completed the design of the new certificate shall be placed on file in the archives of the Society.

On motion of Mr. Edward King, it was

Resolved: That the report be spread upon the Minutes, and that the Secretary be authorized to print the same and send a copy to each member of the Society.

GEORGE G. DE WITT,
Secretary.

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REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE.

The special committee to whom were referred the resolutions of the Society at its meeting on March 3, 1892, relating to a new Certificate of Membership, or Diploma, respectfully

Report

That in accordance with their communication to the Society at its meeting in June last,—that they had unanimously agreed upon the form, subjects, and style of a new design,—they have had that design fully completed in colors, and herewith present the original drawing for the consideration and action of the Society.

As many members were not present at the June meeting, the reasons for the change from the old diploma are restated.

The blank impressions of the old certificate had long been exhausted. In preparing a new one, it was deemed proper to correct some defects, and one great error, which existed in the old one, and which forbade its absolute reproduction. The true date of the organization of the Society is the 28th of February, 1835, while that, in Roman numerals, on the face of the old certificate is the 23d of February, 1835. This grave error has not been generally known, and the mention of it will strike most of the membership with surprise.

The spaces left for dates, names of officers, and the name of the individual member, on the face of the old certificate, were found to be much too small for their respective purposes.

The representations of the "Stadt-Huys" of New Amsterdam, and the second City Hall,—the English one,—were both very incorrect; the former not being the oldest and best view extant, and the latter not being the real edifice as it was erected in 1700, but as it was altered in 1789 to accommodate the first

Congress of the United States on its organization in that year, after which, while occupied by Congress, it was known as "Federal Hall." Its site is now occupied by the handsome Doric white marble United States Sub-Treasury Building, at the corner of Wall and Nassau Streets, facing down Broad Street.

The view of New Amsterdam at the bottom of the old diploma was not the earliest and best view of the old Dutch city, but a very much later and vastly inferior one.

Then, too, on the old diploma were depicted two scenes which never existed,—a grave error in an historic document,—one termed "The Landing of Hendrick Hudson," and the other called "New Amsterdam in 1613-14."

The great navigator, according to the journal of his voyage, never landed on Manhattan Island, nor in its vicinity; and the earliest view ever taken of New Amsterdam was not taken in 1613-14, but about the year 1650, by Augustine Heermans. These two purely imaginary scenes were deemed utterly inappropriate for a Certificate of Membership of this Society.

For these reasons your committee decided

to prepare and submit an entirely new design for a diploma, but retaining the style of the minor ornamentation of the old one, which new design is now before you.

This design represents an open parchment scroll, bearing on its face, in rich antique letters illuminated in brilliant colors, the name of the Society in full, the operative words conferring membership, sufficient spaces for names and dates, and attached to it at its right-hand corner by a silken cord plaited in three colors, the seal of the Society impressed in gold.

Surrounding the scroll, three below and six above it, are compartments, or panels, separated from each other by mediæval ornamentation in gold, orange, white, and blue. Within these compartments, or panels, are views in light tints of the civic edifices and historic places of Old New-York, and the coats of arms, in their true heraldic colors, or tinctures, as granted to the city by its Dutch and English rulers, and borne during its three eras—Dutch, English, and American.

At the left of the scroll overlooking all, under a Gothic canopy relieved in gold, stands

St. Nicholas in his robes, his mitre upon his head, his crosier in his hands, and clustering at his feet the little children he loved so well.

Brief notices of the edifices, places, and arms represented may be of interest as showing their appropriateness for a diploma of a Society exclusively composed, and ever to be exclusively composed, of the descendants of the ancient people of New-York, who therein dwelt from generation to generation during the two centuries preceding our own, now so near its close.

In the centre and largest of the three compartments below the parchment scroll is seen the first and best view of New Amsterdam. It is reproduced of the exact size of the original copperplate in Van der Donck's famous work on New Netherland, printed in old Amsterdam in 1656. It was taken by Augustine Heermans about 1650. This is not the view of the *Fort* as it appeared in 1651, in a work published in that year in Holland, entitled "A Description of Virginia, New Netherland, New England, and certain Islands in the West Indies," but is the first view of the *City*. It did not accompany the first edition of Van

der Donck's New Netherland, issued in 1655, although the view of the *Fort* did; but in the second edition, that of 1656, it appears finely engraved upon copper at the foot of a general map of New Netherland.

In the compartment on its left, beneath the figure of St. Nicholas, is a view of the building in which this Society was born,—“Washington Hall,”—where it was organized by our honored predecessors, on the 28th day of February, 1835.

One only of those distinguished sons of New-York and St. Nicholas survives to this day—in a green and happy old age, in full possession of his mental powers, beloved and revered by three generations of children and friends—the Honorable Hamilton Fish, successively Governor and Senator, of, and from, New-York, and Secretary of State of the United States; who was the secretary of the first meeting in this building, and long the Secretary, and later the President, of this Society. Another gentleman too survives, who, though not present at the organization, became a member during the first year of the Society's existence—our honored friend, Alexander J. Cotheal.

Washington Hall was long one of the prominent hotels of this city. It was built in 1809 by a political organization called the "Washington Benevolent Society," organized on the 4th July, 1808, to support Federal views in opposition to the "Tammany Society, or Columbian Order," which maintained Democratic-Republican principles. After some years it was changed into a hotel, and at the time of the organization of this Society within its walls, it was kept by James Ward. It stood on the southeast corner of Broadway and Reade Street, occupying about half the block on Broadway between Reade and Chambers Streets. It remained till 1844, when it was bought by the late Alexander T. Stewart to complete the front on Broadway of the great commercial edifice he then projected and erected, which was the very first of the gigantic stores and warehouses of New-York, now, however, a huge office-building.

In the compartment, or panel, on the right of the picture of New Amsterdam, is seen that historic place, the Bowling-Green. The view is taken from the site of old Fort George, looking north, up Broadway, and shows it as

it was in 1835, with the old colonial Kennedy, Watts, Livingston, and Van Cortlandt houses on its west side; and the Adelphi Hotel, built in 1827, at the northeast corner of Beaver Street on the east side. It is the one historic spot in New-York which has never been encroached upon since the foundation of the city up to this day. The Bowling-Green was originally an open space before the Fort, which overlooked it from the south, in the Dutch, in the English, and in the early American periods. It was the heart of New Amsterdam and New-York.

It has been, with the adjacent Fort and Battery, both of which opened upon it from their landward sides, the theatre of more important events, Dutch, English, and American, than any other locality in the city, since that bright September day in 1609, when Hudson in the "Half-Moon" sailed past it upon the voyage of discovery up the magnificent river which bears his name. It was called "The Plaine before the Fort," and on it were held military parades, fairs, Indian treaties, civic receptions, Christmas, Paas, and Pinkster festivals, ball games, and burghers' meetings.

It witnessed Stuyvesant's reluctant surrender of the Fort and Province to the English under Nicolls, the lowering of the Dutch flag, and the hoisting for the first time of the red-cross banner of St. George.

Under English rule it was used for the same purposes; the military displays were larger, the fairs greater and more numerous. The Dutch festivals were not only kept up, but were supplemented by others on the birthdays of the English sovereigns and those of their royal infants. Crowds stood there to hear the proclaiming by sound of trumpet of every new Governor on his taking command of his Province, and to see the Speaker and the Assembly of the Province go in stately procession to the Fort, either to congratulate his Excellency on his accession, or on the opening of the Provincial Legislature to bear to him their formal address in answer to his speech from the throne; the Speaker in his wig and robes, preceded by the sergeant-at-arms in laced cocked hat and small clothes, girt with a sword, and bearing aloft the mace richly gilded, surmounted by a royal crown.

In March, 1733, prompted by gentlemen in

its neighborhood, then and for a century later the court, or fashionable end, of New-York, the city authorities took steps to improve the open space, and, in their own words,

“*Resolved*, That this Corporation will lease a piece of ground lying at the lower end of Broadway fronting to the Fort, to some of the inhabitants of the said Broadway, in order to be inclosed to make a Bowling-Green thereof, with walks therein, for the beauty and ornament of the said street, as well as for the recreation and delight of the inhabitants of the City, leaving the street on each side thereof fifty feet in breadth, under such covenants and restrictions, as to the court shall seem expedient.”

In April, 1733, the mayor, Robert Lurting, Aldermen Van Gelde and Philipse, and Mr. de Peyster, or any three of them, were appointed a committee “to lay out the ground at the lower end of Broadway near the Fort for a bowling-green,” and it was ordered “that the same be leased to Mr. John Chambers, Mr. Peter Bayard, and Mr. Peter Jay, for the term of eleven years, for the use aforesaid, at the annual rent of a pepper corn.” This com-

mittee inclosed it with a wooden fence, and laid it out accordingly. For some reason the lease was not given; but in the next year, 1734, a lease was duly executed to Mr. John Chambers, Mr. Peter Bayard, and Mr. John Roosevelt, for a bowling-green only, at the same rent for ten years; and these same gentlemen, in 1742, applied for, and obtained, a renewal of the lease for a further term of eleven years from the expiration thereof, at a rent of twenty shillings per annum.

Such was the origin of the Bowling-Green, the first public square in New-York.

Few of the thousands upon thousands who pass that square now, even of those who see it daily, know, or realize, that the ancient iron railing upon a discolored stone base, which still surrounds the beautiful green oval in its centre, filled with trees and flowers, is one of the very few historic remains of the old colonial city still left to metropolitan New-York. That fence and its base was erected by the city corporation in 1771,—a hundred and twenty-one years ago,—pursuant to a resolution unanimously passed to fence in “the green before his Majesty’s Fort” with “iron rails and a

stone foundation agreeable to a plan now exhibited to this Board, and have contracted with Messrs. Richard Sharpe and others for completing the same for the consideration of *£800" (two thousand dollars).

The object was to provide a fit surrounding for the gilt equestrian statue of King George III., which the Assembly of New-York had voted to erect as an expression of the thanks of the people of the Province for the repeal of the Stamp Act, the arrival of which from England was then daily expected; and which the Governor, Council, and Assembly had asked the city's permission to place in the centre of the Bowling-Green. Five years later, on the evening of the 9th of July, 1776, in the morning of which day the Declaration of Independence had been for the first time publicly read in the Park, on the spot now occupied by the fountain in front of the City Hall, the statue was torn down by a mob and broken to pieces, its pedestal being left standing. Very large parts of the lead in which it was cast, and the marble slab on which the horse stood, are now in the possession of the New-York Historical

* In New-York currency.

Society. Other parts of it were carried to Connecticut, where the lead was run into musket-balls, to be used a little later against the troops of that same king, whose personal policy in England absolutely forced his American people into that rebellion which terminated in a successful Revolution. Long may the mute witness of this event remain untouched in New-York's ancient Bowling-Green!

Of the six compartments above the parchment scroll, the first two on the right of the design show respectively the "Stadt-Huys," the first municipal edifice on Manhattan Island, and the first coat of arms granted by the authorities in Holland to their new city in America. The view of the former is taken from a pencil sketch made in 1679 by the Labadist missionaries Dankers and Sluyter, who visited New Amsterdam in that year. It was found in the manuscript journal of their mission by the late Hon. Henry C. Murphy, who bought that document in Holland when minister to The Hague, translated it, and published it with this, and all its other illustrations reproduced, for the Long Island Historical Society, of which he was the President. It was

built of stone on Pearl Street, facing the East River, at the head of what was, and still is, Coenties Slip. It was guarded in front by one of the "rondeels," or half-moon batteries, used in the fortification of cities at that day. This was also of stone, and mounted three "culverins," which are seen in the picture. The "Stadt-Huys" itself was erected in 1642 by Governor Kieft, at the joint expense of the West India Company and citizens who subscribed for the purpose, upon land belonging to the Company, for a hotel, and was then, it is believed, the largest building in the city.

In the troubled times of Stuyvesant's administration, meetings of burghers, both great and small, were held in it to try to obtain more liberty of municipal action than that zealous supporter of the West India Company was inclined to allow. The burgomaster and schepens in 1653 addressed the West India Company, stating that Stuyvesant's instructions were too narrow, and asked for municipal institutions and powers like those of old Amsterdam, and among them a Stadt-Huys, or City Hall, and a seal separate from that of the

Province of New Netherland. The directors answered, granting them the Stadt-Huys, and saying that they had "decreed that a seal for the City of New Amsterdam should be prepared and forwarded." This seal contained the first coat of arms of this city, which was a modification of the coat of the city of old Amsterdam, changed, however, in tinctures and in the crest. These arms are depicted in the second of the upper compartments in their correct heraldic colors, from an engraving of them in Van der Donck's New Netherland of 1656, three years only after they had been granted by the authorities in Holland. The seal on which they appeared also contained above them the monogram of the Dutch West India Company under a short mantling; but as this was no part whatever of the coat of arms, it has not, of course, been reproduced.

These arms are thus blazoned:

SHIELD: *Argent, on a pale sable, three crosses saltire argent, between two adosses in pale sable.*

CREST: *On a wreath of the colors, a beaver proper, facing to the right.*



In the arms of old Amsterdam the shield is: *Gules, on a pale sable, three crosses saltire argent*, without adosses; and the crest is the Dutch lion rampant.

In both shields the chief charge, the pale sable with three crosses saltire argent, is the same, but the color, gules (red), of the old shield was changed to argent (white), in the new one, and the two adosses (sable) were added. The crest was changed from the lion rampant of Holland to a beaver in his natural color, the beaver being the most valuable production of New Netherland at that time. No motto was given, but the legend on the seal was, "*Sigillum Amstelodamensis in Novo Belgio.*" In this connection it may be stated that the coat of arms on the seal of the Province of New Netherland, from which, as above stated, the people of New Amsterdam asked for a separate one for their city, was granted by the States-General of Holland in 1623, and is thus blazoned:

SHIELD: *Argent, a beaver proper in bend dexter.*
CREST: *A Count's coronet, or.**

* It was no herald's fancy that gave to the Province of New Netherland the coat of arms of a Count (not an Earl, as sometimes stated). It was simply the heraldic expression of the sei-

The legend was "Sigillum Novi Belgii"—in English, the Seal of New Netherland.

The next two compartments contain respectively the second City Hall, built under English rule in 1700, and the arms granted to New-York by its Ducal Proprietor as King of England in 1686, a short time after he had succeeded to the throne. The growth of the city northward, the increase of the public business, and the bad condition of the old Stadt-Huys together compelled the city corporation to erect a new City Hall. It first voted to do so in 1696, but civic action was then, as now, a slow matter, and it was not till the mayoralty of Johannes de Peyster, in 1698, that it was begun, and it was completed in 1700, in the mayoralty of David Provoost, the old Stadt-Huys having been sold in August, 1699, to John Rodman for

gnorant jurisdiction and powers under the Roman-Dutch law of the kind of fief which the charter of 1621 and its amendments of 1623 legally vested in the Dutch West India Company over their new province in America, as its local sovereign—jurisdiction and powers similar in degree to those of the old "Counts of Holland" in the Dutch "Countship of Holland." This subject is very ably stated in Mr. Robert Ludlow Fowler's learned introduction to the Grolier Club's reprint of Bradford's Laws of New-York of 1694, written since this report was made.

£920 (about \$2300) to furnish a part of its cost. It contained, in addition to the city offices, the assembly-chamber of the Province and the court-room of the Supreme Court. By these bodies and the minor courts and the city government was it occupied during the English rule to the end of 1783, and by the same bodies under the State of New-York as an independent sovereignty until 1788, when by adopting the new Constitution in July of that year, New-York entered the new confederation and became one of the United States of America. The city corporation then altered and enlarged the building in time for the meeting of the first Congress and the inauguration of constitutional government in the United States, and of Washington as President, in the spring of 1789. Called "Federal Hall" during its occupation by Congress, after the removal of that body to Philadelphia, late in 1790, it became again the City Hall, and continued to be the home of the city government till 1811, when to the indelible disgrace of the city it was sold and demolished, the new City Hall, the present one, being then on the eve of completion. It ought to have

been preserved with the greatest care and reverence, as the cradle, not only of parliamentary liberty and English law in New-York, but of constitutional government in the United States of America, as well as the scene of the first great President's inauguration. Our younger sister cities, Boston and Philadelphia, have jealously preserved and sacredly guarded their colonial civic edifices, while New-York has permitted hers to be destroyed—a sacrifice to false economy.

The coat of arms shown in the adjoining compartment was granted, as has been stated, by King James II. to the city a few months after he ascended the English throne. It was engraved on a new seal, which was delivered with much formality by the governor, in the king's name, to the mayor, aldermen, and commonalty, on the 24th of July, 1686, and duly accepted by them. There was no motto, but the legend on the seal is "*Sigillum civitatis Novi Eboraci*," in the contracted form of "*Sigill. civitat. Novi Eborac.*"—in English, "Seal of the City of New-York." These arms are shown depicted in their correct heraldic tinctures, or colors. They are thus blazoned:

SHIELD: *Argent, charged with the four sails of a windmill proper; between their outer ends, two beavers proper, one in chief and one in base, and two flour-barrels proper, in fess, one on each side.*

CREST: *A royal crown, or, lined gules.*

These arms have remained unchanged, and are the coat of arms of the city of New-York to-day; the crest, however, was altered, in 1784, to a bald eagle proper, rising from a demi-terrestrial globe, which was adopted, in place of the crown, from the original State arms of the State of New-York.

The changes on this shield denote the source of the commercial supremacy of New-York. That supremacy grew out of a law prohibiting the bolting of flour outside of the city limits between the years 1678 and 1694, which gave to its people a monopoly of the export trade in breadstuffs and biscuits. This, with export of furs, really made the City of New-York the centre of the trade of America, a proud position she will ever retain.

With the slight modification above stated these ancient arms have been borne by our

city continuously from the reign of the last Stuart king of New-York to the close of the rule of Benjamin Harrison, the twenty-third President of the United States of America, the long period of two hundred and six years. May they ever so remain!

Although no part, heraldically, of the city arms, the supporters have been introduced on account of their interest. Supporters are merely ornaments of shields or escutcheons, which alone show the arms of an individual, city, state, or nation. They are added sometimes (for thousands of coats of arms have none) simply to give greater effect to the shields they support.

Those added to the city arms are: on the dexter, or right, side of the shield, a sailor in the dress and cap of two centuries ago, holding in his right hand a ship's sounding-line; and on its sinister, or left, side, an Indian chief in his feathered finery, holding in his left hand a stringed bow. The former was said to be in honor of King James, for besides being Lord Proprietor of New-York as Duke of York, he was also at the same time Lord High Admiral of England (and a naval officer of ability), and

as such Commander-in-Chief of all English sailors, as well those of the merchant service as those of the Royal Navy; the latter commemorated the native inhabitants and possessors of his Province in America.

In the fifth compartment is a view of the present City Hall, founded in 1803 and completed in 1812. It is placed with its predecessors, not only as one of the three, and on account of the beauty and purity of its architecture, but also for preservation; for it has been seriously proposed to tear it down, to erect a larger edifice on the same site — a piece of vandalism that may yet be carried into effect. Its façades are in the beautiful style of Inigo Jones, after that of the banqueting-hall of the Palace of Whitehall in London. The cupola in the view is the original one, burnt by the careless use of fireworks in 1858, on the occasion of the celebration of the laying of the first Atlantic cable in that year, not the present inferior one which replaced it. Mayor Edward Livingston laid its corner-stone on the 26th of May, 1803, at its south-east corner. And on the 4th of July, 1811, although not quite finished, Mayor DeWitt

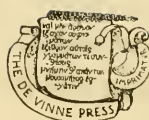
Clinton and the common council celebrated the day in their new hall. Its architect was John McComb, a native New-Yorker, who was also the architect at the same time of Washington Hall, the birthplace of this Society, as stated above. He was born in New-York, October 17, 1763, and died in the same city on the 25th of May, 1853, at the good old age of ninety years.

Such is the design for a new Certificate of Membership, or Diploma, and the reasons for, and explanation of, the illustrations of the same, which your committee venture to hope may meet with the approbation of their brethren of the Society.

It is the design of the committee themselves, but the execution of the ornamental and heraldic portion is by Mr. Rudolph B. Irmtraut, and that of the historic views and places is by the eminent Mr. Joseph Keppler, both well-known artists in this city.

EDWARD F. DE LANCEY,	} <i>Committee</i>
SMITH E. LANE,	
HOWLAND PELL,	
	} <i>on</i>
	} <i>Certificate.</i>

December 1, 1892.

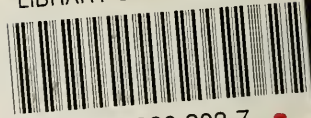








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